GOD'S POCKET MARINE PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

March 2003

Approved by:

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Date: March 5/03

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Date:

GOD'S POCKET MARINE PROVINCIAL PARK
Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role
The **primary** role of God's Pocket Marine Park is to contribute to the protection of representative marine ecosystems. The park is a major contributor to the representation of the Queen Charlotte Strait Ecosection and its upland and marine ecosystems, which are both under represented in the protected areas system.

By protecting representative marine ecosystems, God's Pocket Marine Park protects habitat for numerous marine mammal species typically found in the Queen Charlotte Strait including killer whales, Pacific white-sided dolphins, Dall's porpoises, harbour porpoises, and harbour seals, as well as northern sea lions, humpback whales, and gray whales on a more infrequent basis. The park serves as habitat for sockeye, pink and chum salmon, groundfish, and marine invertebrates such as clams, cockles, and sea urchins. It also provides nesting habitat and is a migration stop and resting area for seabirds, including glaucous-winged gulls, red-necked phalaropes, marbled murrelets, bald eagles, auklets, petrels, shearwaters, fulmars, albatross, oystercatchers, and waterfowl.

Secondary Role
The **secondary** role is to provide a marine recreation experience for those cruising Queen Charlotte Strait or heading out on a weekend trip from Port Hardy. The park is comprised of a group of islands including Hurst, Bell, Boyle, Crane and numerous islets. The islands provide sheltered anchorages for small boats, and provide significant recreation opportunities in the form of fishing, boating, kayaking, and scuba diving. The waters in this park are clear and teeming with marine life providing some of the best underwater diving on the Pacific Coast. Primitive camping is possible at Bell Island and in Harlequin Bay at Hurst Island, and a rustic trail connects the anchorage in Harlequin Bay with the south side of Hurst Island. A private resort is located in the park on Hurst Island in the anchorage known as God's Pocket.

Tertiary Role
The **tertiary** role of the park is to protect cultural values, both First Nations and European. The park protects significant First Nations values that offer glimpses to the past and demonstrate their tie to the land. Past European settlements are also located in the park.

Management issues

Known Management Issues	Response
Lack of detailed knowledge of natural values	➢ Undertake an ecological inventory to increase knowledge of marine and upland elements.
Impact of boat sewage, recreational use, commercial harvesting	➢ Liaise with sport fishing, boating and dive community to ensure impacts are minimized. ➢ Provide interpretation information to emphasize user ethics, impact of sewage disposal and wildlife viewing ethics. ➢ Work with DFO to minimize impacts from commercial harvesting.

	➢ Work with commercial operators to limit impact on site and between users ➢ Install pit toilets to address sanitation issues.
Aquaculture on the marine values of the park - fish farm operation grandfathered within park boundaries	➢ Encourage fish farm owner to relocate to a different location. ➢ Work with MAFF and fish farms on protecting native species, especially pink salmon.
Lack of public awareness of the park and its cultural values	➢ Increase off-site interpretation (including website) coupled with other protected areas in the vicinity. ➢ Ensure park boundaries are signed.
First Nation relations	➢ Develop a good working relationship with First Nations to protect cultural sites and to reach an understanding of park values and management issues.

Zoning

Natural Environment Zone – covers the entire area of the park (2,025.3 hectares). This zoning best fits the overall purpose of the park. Natural Environment Zoning allows for a range of compatible recreational activities, while providing the Environmental Stewardship Branch with the ability to manage potential impacts on known natural and cultural values. Visitor access may be restricted to preserve the recreation experience or to limit impacts.

Conservation

Representation - ecosection	☒	God's Pocket Marine Park is the largest contributor (with 61.5%) out of 5 protected areas to the representation of the Queen Charlotte Strait *Terrestrial* Ecosection (QCT), which is under represented in the protected areas system at 3.8%. It is also the second largest contributor (with 20.1%) out of 4 protected areas to the representation of the Queen Charlotte Strait *Marine* Ecosection (QCT), which has only 3.3% of its area protected. Broughton Archipelago Marine Park is the largest contributor with 66.2%.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	☒	Minimal contribution (0.61%) to the representation of CWHvh1, which is well represented in the protected areas system at 19.3%
Special Features	☒	Fast water currents, marine ecosystems and species
Rare/Endangered Values	☒	*Red-listed species:* marbled murrelet, killer whale (both the northeast Pacific resident population and the west coast transient population). *Blue-listed species*: red-necked phalarope, humpback whale, gray whale, and harbour porpoise. *Yellow-listed species of conservation concern (S4):* black oystercatcher, bald eagle, Dall's porpoise, and sockeye salmon.
Scientific/Research Opportunities	☒	Marine mammal and seabird research

Recreation

Representation backcountry	☒	Marine context
destination	☒	Strategic and protected anchorage, SCUBA diving, kayaking and fishing
travel corridor	☒	Along principle marine route (Gordon Channel in Queen Charlotte Strait), and secondary route used by cruise ships going to Alaska through Christie Passage
local recreation	☒	Boating, Kayaking, fishing and SCUBA diving
Special Opportunities	☒	Nearby Browning Pass is an area rated as one of the best diving sites in the world
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	☒	First Nation culture and history; whales.

		Opportunity to provide information through God's Pocket Resort

Cultural Heritage

Representation	☒	Post-contact European settlement
Special Feature	☒	Middens, archaeological sites

Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	☐	Not Applicable
Relationship to other PAs	☒	Part of a system of marine oriented protected areas in the north end of Vancouver Island
Co-operative Management Arrangements	☐	Possible co-management relationship with First Nations
Partnerships	☐	Not Applicable
Vulnerability	☒	The threats to the park's natural values include commercial harvesting, aquaculture, boat sewage, potential oil spills, and recreation impacts. Threats to the cultural values include artifact theft, recreation use and lack of awareness of the values.
Relationship to other Strategies	☒	Designated as a result of recommendations in the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan.

Area: 2,025.3 hectares (499 ha upland; 1,526.3 ha foreshore)

Date of establishment: July 12, 1995

Zoning Map - God's Pocket Marine Park

Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83

Natural Environment
Protected Area Boundary

0 1
km

Produced in Mar 2003 for
Ministry of Water, Land and Air
Protection by MSRM Decision
Support Services

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